United Nations A/60/716

General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 March 2006
English
Original: Spanish

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 71 (b) and 107

Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

International drug control

Letter dated 10 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith important information concerning the most recent offensive undertaken by the Government of the United States of America, on the basis of falsehoods and distortions, against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 107, International drug control, and 71 (b), Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Fermín **Toro Jiménez**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

06-26917 (E) 200306 200306

Annex to the letter dated 10 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to draw the international community's attention to the political strategy which the United States of America has been using for some time to delegitimize and destabilize the Government of the Republic.

The *2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* issued by the United States Department of State claims that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a key transit point for drugs leaving Colombia. This presupposes that our country does not adequately secure the borders of its territory. The report also asserts that in 2005 we did not demonstrate due compliance with drug control agreements and that we need to make "substantial efforts" to attack corruption and enhance transparency and cooperation.

Consequently, our country, as a result of this bizarre, rash and defamatory assessment, is no longer eligible to receive United States aid or other types of special assistance for combating drug trafficking.

The only explanation we can find for these attacks is that they are part of a policy being waged by the United States Government to marshal world opinion against our country and to sully its record in this area.

The foreign policy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the area of combating drug production, trafficking and consumption

I
Principles

In our Republic, the problem of drugs and drug trafficking is regarded as a crime against humanity because it affects the weakest sectors of society. Our country therefore supports all policies aimed at eradicating illicit drugs by means of action and cooperation implemented through the establishment of domestic and international mechanisms, both bilateral and multilateral, that help to strengthen the specific actions taken as an immediate response to the challenges posed by this issue. It is essential, in this regard, that all countries that share this responsibility take vigorous action to combat the use of narcotics in destination countries so that efforts to control production can be effective.

The two key links in the drug trafficking chain are production and consumption. If there is no consumption, there will be no production or trafficking. Thus, it must necessarily be concluded that the primary task in the fight against drug trafficking falls to the countries where illicit drug use is concentrated: those of the first world, where the unravelling of the social fabric, dehumanization, the tyranny of the market and the weakening of family ties have contributed to the significant increase in the use of narcotics.

In view of the foregoing, we understand the importance of international assistance and technical cooperation to combat drug abuse and illicit drug

production and trafficking. It is important to specify, however, that no agreement to cooperate in combating drug trafficking can undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, especially those concerning territorial integrity and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. The mandate which we have assumed is based on ethical and social considerations, as we are moved and alarmed by the painful spectacle of the youth and child populations victimized by this terrible scourge, which wreaks havoc in families and communities and represents a public health problem of the utmost importance.

To the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, this endeavour is a matter of principle, regardless of whether or not our efforts are recognized or certified by foreign authorities. This is a crime that directly affects the well-being of the most vulnerable sectors of society.

II
The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the war on drugs

We will limit ourselves to refuting, with facts and figures, the allegations made by the irresponsible spokespersons for the Department of State of the United States of America.

In 2004 the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela set a new record for the confiscation of drugs in the hemisphere. The amount confiscated that year was 43 tons. In 2005, when the country was neither decertified nor certified, the Venezuelan authorities confiscated 79.5 tons, or almost twice the amount seized in 2004. In addition, crop eradication efforts were stepped up. Some 248 hectares of land used for drug cultivation in areas along the border with Colombia were cleared. Moreover, an extremely important money-laundering case was prosecuted in the State of Táchira in the western part of the country.

In 2005 the Venezuelan National Assembly passed two laws to combat the scourge of drugs and irregular groups: the Organized Crime Act and the reform of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, which stiffened the penalties for crimes related to drug trafficking.

It should be added that a European Union-sponsored household survey was conducted in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela last year. The survey showed that 0.47 per cent of our country's inhabitants take drugs. This contrasts sharply with the percentage of drug users in the United States: statistics indicate that 9.47 per cent of the United States population, or 35 million of its inhabitants, take drugs. This situation does indeed merit close attention on the part of the United States Government.

The United States Government is attempting to turn victims into villains and villains into victims. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not consume the amount of drugs consumed in the United States. This political stance on the part of the United States Government is also a tactic for hiding its own incompetence and inefficiency in protecting the health of its citizens with respect to drug use. As long as the problem of cocaine use is not addressed, inflows of the drug will continue unabated from producer countries to the United States and other countries where drugs are consumed.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has continued to develop its anti-drug policy. This year, the authorities intend to implement, along with Colombia, a

bilateral crop eradication plan and in-depth exchanges of information on ways to combat money-laundering. We have also signed anti-drug agreements with 42 countries. We are cooperating and working in this area with all the European countries.

We have held negotiations with the United States authorities on a new anti-drug agreement; currently, we are waiting for those authorities to signal their willingness to sign it. Even though we do not yet have an agreement, we have greatly improved our efficiency in combating illicit drugs. In fact, Venezuelan society has designed mechanisms for combating the drug trafficking industry, even though our country does not participate in or benefit from that industry. We will pursue our efforts with respect to drug trafficking because we sincerely believe in the significance of the efforts under way to combat the illicit drug trade. A United Nations study on why cocaine use is still so prevalent in the United States would be of interest.

III
Conclusions

On 10 October 2005, in the United Nations General Assembly debate on international drug control, the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported that on 8 August 2005 we had been obligated to suspend our relations with the United States Drug Enforcement Agency in our country. Through an investigation launched in late July 2005 by the Office of the Attorney-General of the Republic, it was discovered that that Agency was conducting subversive intelligence operations aimed at destabilizing the State and its institutions. The United States Government responded to this sovereign decision by questioning our attitude towards the drug problem, in an attempt to portray our country in a negative light so as to discredit our policy against drug trafficking. We refer back to the above-mentioned facts and figures, which speak for themselves.

We do not believe that any State can arrogate the right to establish criteria or benchmarks with which to gauge or disparage the efforts of other States to combat illicit drugs. Moreover, no State can justifiably take unilateral coercive measures to impose policies on any other State with respect to the fight against illicit drug trafficking. We reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to continue to take decisive action against this scourge, on the understanding that the consumer countries must carry out genuine, effective policies to reduce the demand for narcotics.

The United States of America persists in manipulating the international community by waging a campaign, through the media outlets it controls, to discredit a people whose efforts to combat the drug problem are based on principle and on the interests of public health and social development. The United States Government's attack on our country is systematic and carried out on various fronts. Its purpose, we repeat, is to systematically discredit the Venezuelan Government, which is out of favour with the United States authorities.

Day by day, our country is winning more worldwide recognition for its achievements in the social field and for its international policy, the cornerstone of which is cooperation in all areas, particularly the promotion and observance of human rights.

We reiterate our commitment to combat illicit drugs and eradicate their harmful consequences, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, current provisions of public international law and our Constitution.

We reject the political ploys being used by the United States of America, which are based on lies and distortions and are aimed at destabilizing the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and reducing it to a quasi-colonial society dominated and exploited by the Government of that country and by transnational corporations. Notwithstanding this situation, we reiterate our irreversible and incorruptible resolve to pursue the path of sovereign self-determination.